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NSC BRIEFING

5 October 1954

### CHINESE OFFSHORE ISLANDS

#### I. Communist threat to the Quemoy continues.

A. Communist shelling of the Quemoy has been averaging less than 100 rounds per day since 22 September, most of this fire hitting Little Quemoy and the two tiny islands to the southwest.

B. However, Communist artillery is reportedly being relocated and resupplied, suggesting that heavy shelling may be resumed at any time. Nationalists have been largely unsuccessful in attempts to destroy Communist guns, as they are withdrawn to caves when under air attack.

C. A Communist tank has been sighted on beach near 25X1X4

25X1X4 Lienho north of Big Quemoy, [REDACTED]

"very large" tanks

[REDACTED]  
moving through Foochow toward Amoy in mid-September.

25X1

NSA Declassification/Release Instructions on File.

25X1

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25X1

- 2 -

25X1

E

[redacted] rein-  
forcement of Communist artillery in Amoy area,  
concentration of Communist troops on coast south  
of Amoy, use of motorized junks in landing  
exercises.

25X1

F.

[redacted]  
reports that Communist loudspeakers near Quemoy  
and Communist radio near Amoy have announced that  
Quemoy will be in Communist hands by 15 October.

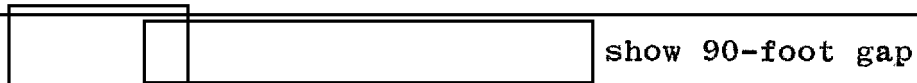
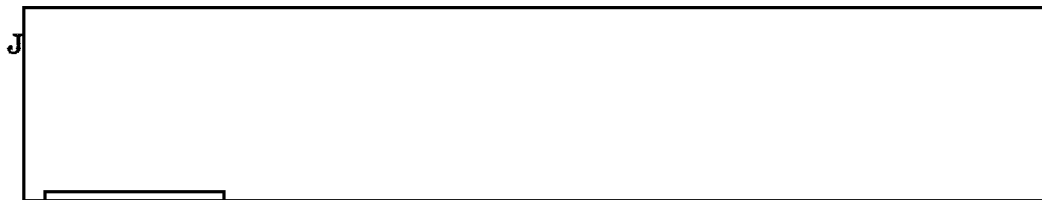
G. American military advisory group at Taipei believes  
there is "distinct possibility" of Communist  
assault on Quemoy at any time. MAAG speculates  
that most likely targets seem to be two tiny  
islands (Tatan and Erhtan) southwest of Little  
Quemoy, or possibly Little Quemoy itself.

H. Nationalists would not defend Tatan and Erhtan.  
Attack on Little Quemoy unlikely unless followed  
quickly by assault on Big Quemoy.

I. We agree there is possibility of Communist attack  
on any or all Quemoy islands, as major attack  
could be launched with little warning, using the  
150,000 to 200,000 troops believed to be located  
within 150 miles of Amoy.

25X1

- 3 -



show 90-foot gap

at Amoy end; this does not mean that Communists cannot attack Quemoy without completing causeway, as sufficient shipping is available to ferry supplies and forces could be assembled in other nearby areas.

## II. Nationalists in Quemoy area remain alert.

- A. Since 24 September the Nationalists have continued extensive air reconnaissance over the Quemoy and adjoining coastal areas. Air activities have not included bombing or strafing of Communist targets since 23 September.
- B. On the ground the Nationalists have maintained counter battery against Communist artillery positions and have carried out small intelligence raids against the mainland. On 1 October Nationalist combat patrol succeeded in snatching two civilians in raid on Chungwu, coastal town about 40 miles northeast of Quemoy.



- 4 -

- C. Nationalists have brought in additional reinforcements to strengthen Quemoy garrison. First tank battalion from second armored division arrived at Quemoy on 2 October. Arrival of this unit with 60 M-5 World War II light tanks brings to 98 the total number of tanks available to the Quemoy commander. In addition, he has 12 75mm M-8 assault guns, also of World War II vintage.
- D. Quemoy garrison now numbers approximately 53,500 regulars, plus some 1,350 guerrilla troops. Nationalist artillery now on Quemoy includes: 52 75mm howitzers (4 battalions plus); 36 105mm howitzers M-3 (3 battalions); 41 105mm howitzers M-2 (3 battalions plus); 5 155mm guns GPF (1 battery plus); 12 155mm howitzers (1 battalion); and 12 40mm AA guns (2 batteries).

III. Communist activity near the Matsus continues.

- A. On 27 September 1,000 Communist junks and two larger vessels were spotted near Foochow opposite the Matsus. Appearance of this large amount of shipping very probably explained by the fact that "yellow fish"--a Chinese delicacy--are currently running in the coastal waters, and the local fishermen are out in force.

- 5 -

- B. About 200 of these junks apparently approached the Matsus on morning of 29 September, but withdrew quickly when Nationalists on the islands fired two shells. This incident gave rise to claim in Taipei press that a Communist "invasion" of northern Matsu was repelled.
- C. The widespread fishing in this area provides natural front for a possible Communist attack on the Matsus. So long as large number of junks is concentrated in the area, threat of such an attack remains.
- D. The Matsu defense commander reports that he has recently heard Communist artillery practicing on the mainland, and he says Communist artillery in the area has been reinforced since 1 September. This suggests that Matsus might soon be target for Communist shelling.
- E. "Unidentified" aircraft have been reported over Matsus on several recent occasions. These may have been Communist, but Matsu commander has frequently complained that he receives no information on Nationalist air operations in the area. The planes, therefore, might well have been Nationalist.

- 6 -

## IV. Nationalists also alert in Matsu area;

A. Nationalist garrison of 3,000 regulars and perhaps 2,400 guerrillas in the Matsu area is alert to the possibility of a Communist attack, as evidenced by reports of an "invasion attempt" by fishing junks on 29 September.

B. [REDACTED]

[REDACTED] fortifications

there appeared scanty and that defense plans-- which include a withdrawal to high ground in the event of attack--were "not impressive."

## V. Communist activity near the Tachens continues.

A. Activity near the Tachens is marked by increasing number of Communist air patrols along coast from Ningpo and over the Tachens. Both MIG-15 jets and LA-11 piston fighters are used, and in past weeks have made several flights over the island, apparently for photographic reconnaissance. They seldom attack Nationalist forces on the islands, but have strafed Nationalist naval vessels in the Tachen harbor.

- 7 -

B. Increasing Communist air activity due largely to inadequacy of Tachen antiaircraft artillery and to fact that Formosa-based fighters seldom venture into area where Communists easily have air superiority.

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NS  
A

C.

D.

of Communist naval vessels are concentrating in Choushan Islands, which have become one of the chief Communist naval bases. An attack on the Tachens, which could come at any time with little warning, would probably be staged at least in part from the Choushans, where the Chinese Communist 22nd Army (50,000 troops) is located. Another likely assembly point would be Haimen, where shipping concentration was reported two weeks ago, and where the Chinese Communist 20th Army is located.

25X1

Approved For Release 2005/08/10 : CIA-RDP80R01443R000300070014-8

- 8 -

E.

Yangtze

estuary has been closed to nonmilitary traffic and that on 30 September it was being patrolled by Russian vessels. No good reason for Communists to do this,

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F. On early morning of 3 October, an unknown number of Chinese Communist "frogmen" raided Pishan, a small island held by Nationalist guerrillas about 30 miles southwest of the main Tachens. One was killed and the others fled. Similar raids on the Quemoy preceded the 3 September artillery attack on the Quemoy.

VI. Nationalist opinion divided on relative threat to various islands.

A. Principal Nationalist activity in the Tachen area, where the Nationalists have 10,000 regular troops and about 7,500 guerrillas, has consisted of naval patrolling and sporadic artillery duels with Communist guns on Toumen Island north of Ichiang.

B. The Nationalist garrison commander is reported to believe that the Communists will not attack the Tachens at this time. He considers a full scale attack on Quemoy more likely.

25X1

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- 9 -

- C. This view reportedly is not shared by Chiang Ching-kuo, the generalissimo's son, who is said to believe an attack on the Tachens more likely than an all-out assault on Quemoy.
- D. In view of Communist strength along the coast, none of the Nationalist islands appear safe from attack. All could conceivably be attacked simultaneously. Cheapest operation would be a move against the Matsus. Capture of the Quemoy would be extremely costly but high in prestige value. Capture of Tachens probably represents middle balance between cost and prestige.

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